

Message Text

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CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 18063

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, JA, PINT

SUBU: "RIGHT TO STRIKE" STRIKE IN RETROSPECT

REF: A) TOKYO 17215 B) TOKYO 17155 AND PREVIOUS

SUMMARY: RECENT CONFRONTATION BETWEEN GOJ AND PUBLIC SERVICE UNIONS ON RIGHT TO STRIKE, CULMINATING IN JAPAN'S LONGEST RAIL STRIKE (REFTELS), STRENGTHENED PRIMIN MIKI'S HOLD ON HIS OFFICE (ALTHOUGH AT CONSIDERABLE COST TO HIS LIBERAL IMAGE), DASHED DEP PRIMIN FUKUDA'S HOPES OF USING ISSUE TO SUCCEED MIKI, INCREASED INFLUENCE OF LDP RIGHT WINGERS ON LABOR POLICY, EXACERBATED DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SOCIALISTS AND COMMUNISTS, AND APPEARS TO HAVE CONFIRMED LDP IN ITS REFUSAL TO GRANT RIGHT TO STRIKE TO NATIONAL RAILROAD WORKERS. ISSUE WILL REMAIN DORMANT UNTIL EARLY SPRING WHEN PUBLIC SERVICE UNIONS THREATENING ANOTHER LENGTHY WALKOUT LINKING STRIKE ISSUE TO ANNUAL WAGE "STRUGGLE" AND HOPING TO EXPAND IT TO INCLUDE PRIVATE RAILWAY WORKERS AS WELL. END
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SUMMARY.

1. BY REFUSING TO COMPROMISE ON BASIC RIGHT TO STRIKE
ISSUE AS PRICE FOR SECURING EARLY END OF RAILWAY AND
POSTAL WORKER WALKOUT, PRIMIN MIKI HEWED CLOSELY TO LDP
OFFICIAL POLICY AND OUTMANUEVERED HIS RIVALS IN PARTY.
THEY HOPED HE WOULD MAKE CONCESSIONS TO STRIKERS SO
UNACCEPTABLE TO PARTY HARD LINERS THAT RESULT WOULD
BE HIS FORCED RESIGNATION. WE HAVE IT ON GOOD AUTHORITY
THAT DEP PRIMIN MUKUDA IN PARTICULAR EXPECTED MIKI TO
MISHANDLE ISSUE, THEREBY PERMITTING HIM TO MAKE
SUCCESSFUL BID FOR LDP PRESIDENCY TO BLOCK THIS POSSIBILITY
EX PRIMIN TANAKA,
COMMANDING LDP'S LARGEST AND RICHEST FACTION, EXERCISED
HIS STILL CONSIDERABLE POLITICAL MUSCLE TO PUSH MIKI INTO
POSITION OF NO COMPROMISES VIS A VIS STRIKERS AND AT
SAME TIME DEFTLY USED THREAT OF DIET DISSOLUTION TO WORRY
SOCIALISTS AND FUKUDA BACKERS WHO STOOD TO SUFFER FROM
EARLY ELECTION.

2. BUT MIKI, IN OPTING FOR SURVIVAL, HAS HAD TO SACRIFICE MUCH
OF HIS LIBERAL IMAGE. MEDIA IN PARTICULAR HAS STRESSED
THEME THAT PRIMIN SOLD OUT HIS PRO-LABOR PRINCIPLES IN
ORDER TO STAY IN OFFICE. WITHIN LDP, ILLEGAL WALKOUT
HAS GREATLY WEAKENED POSITION OF MODERATES ARGUING FOR
GRANTING OF CONDITIONAL RIGHT TO STRIKE TO PUBLIC
ENTERPRISE EMPLOYEES AND STRENGTHENED HAND OF THOSE
WISHING TO MAINTAIN STATUS QUO. ONE UNUSUAL BENEFICIARY
OF STRIKE WITHIN LDP IS DEP CHIEF CABINET SECRETARY
TOSHIKI KAIFU WHOSE EFFECTIVE NIGHTLY TV PRESENTATIONS
OF GOJ'S CASE AGAINST STRIKERS (EMPHASIZING THE THREAT
POSED BY ILLEGAL WALKOUT TO PARLIAMENTARY GOVERNMENT)
HAVE SUDDENLY TRANSFERRED HIM INTO POLITICAL FIGURE
OF NATIONAL PROMINENCE.

3. SOCIALISTS TOOK ON ROLE AS CHIEF NEGOTIATOR FOR PUBLIC
ENTERPRISE UNIONS, WITH GOJ IN DAYS IMMEDIATELY
PRECEDING STRIKE ON MISTAKEN BELIEF THAT PRIMIN MIKI
WOULD MAKE LAST MINUTE POLITICAL CONCESSION WHICH
WOULD REDOUND TO THEIR CREDIT. INSTEAD,
STRIKERS FORCED TO CALL OFF STRIKE UNCONDITIONALLY
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AND ALL SOCIALISTS HAVE TO SHOW FOR THEIR EFFORTS
IS INCREASED PUBLIC SUSPICION THAT JSP IS
NOTHING MORE THAN SOHYO'S POLITICAL MOUTHPIECE. JSP
TRYING TO DOWNPLAY GENERALLY NEGATIVE RECPON TO ITS
ROLE BY CLAIMING THAT VOTERS WILL HAVE OTHER ISSUES ON
THEIR MINDS AT TIME OF NEXT LOWER HOUSE ELECTION.
AS USUAL, "OUTS" IN JSP TRYING TO PIN BLAME FOR DEBACLE
ON JSP LEADERSHIP, PARTICULARLY SEC GEN ISHIBASHI,

AND MAY TRY TO USE ISSUE TO OUST HIM AT NEXT JSP CONVENTION.

4. SOHYO'S PUBLIC ENTERPRISE UNIONS (KOROKYO) APPEAR TO HAVE SO BADLY MISHANDLED STRIKE ISSUE FROM BEGINNING TO END THAT SOME POLITICAL OBSERVERS SERIOUSLY CLAIMING KOROKYO WAS SO AFRAID MIKI MIGHT JUST OFFER THEM CONDITIONAL RIGHT TO STRIKE IT THEREFORE SOUGHT DELIBERATELY TO SABOTAGE ANY POSSIBLE CONCESSIONS FROM GOJ.. MORE LIKELY EXPLANATION IS THAT KOROKYO LEADERSHIP FORCED INTO STRIKE BY PRESSURE FROM RANK AND FILE MILITANTS IN RAILROAD UNIONS AND SOMEHOW EXPECTED PRIME MIKI WOULD BAIL THEM OUT BY MAKING CONCILIATORY GESTURE. ADDITIONALLY, RAILROAD UNION LEADERS ASSUMED THAT ONCE STRIKE BEGAN, IT WOULD RESEMBLE SPRING 1974 WALKOUT WHEN COMMUTER WRATH VIRTUALLY FORCED GOJ TO SEEK EARLY ACCOMMODATION WITH UNION THROUGH LABOR MINISTRY. INSTEAD, LDP DECIDED WALKOUT WAS POLITICAL ISSUE, ORDERED LAB MIN TO KEEP HANDS OFF AND PREVENTED PRIME FROM MAKING ANY CONCESSIONS. KOROKYO LEADERSHIP NOW ALSO FEUDING WITH EACH OTHER OVER WHO RESPONSIBLE FOR DEBACLE, WITH RELATIONS BETWEEN POSTAL WORKERS (ZENTEI) AND NATIONAL RAILWAY WORKERS (KOKURO) PARTICULARLY STRAINED.

5. COMMUNIST PARTY ELEMENTS IN PUBLIC ENTERPRISE UNIONS ARGUING THAT SOCIALISTS INABILITY TO WIN CONCESSIONS FROM GOJ ON ISSUE SHOWS BANKRUPTCY OF SOHYO POLICY OF GRANTING POLITICAL SUPPORT EXCLUSIVELY TO JSP. PREDICTABLY, THIS HAS LED TO ANOTHER ROUND OF MORE CALLING BETWEEN SOCIALISTS AND COMMUNISTS. OTHERWISE, COMMUNISTS' GENERALLY NEGATIVE ATTITUDE TOWARDS STRIKE HAS ADDED TO PARTY'S PUBLIC IMAGE OF MODERATION, BUT IT IS CONFIDENTIAL

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DEBATABLE (WHETHER THIS ALONE WILL RESULT IN ADDITIONAL COMMUNIST VOTES AT NEXT ELECTION)

6. KOROKYO WALKOUT MAY HAVE HAD ONE POSSIBLE LONG RANGE EFFECT HELPFUL TO US INTERESTS HERE. ACCORDING TO PTTI REP, SUPPORT SHOWN FOR STRIKES BY MANY WESTERN LABOR ORGANIZATIONS HAS STRENGTHENED HAND OF THOSE IN SOHYO (PARTICULARLY IN POSTAL WORKERS) TRYING TO PUSH JAPAN'S LARGEST LABOR FEDERATION INTO CLOSER RELATIONSHIP WITH NON-COMMUNIST UNIONS OVERSEAS. CONSEQUENTLY, FRIENDLY RECEPTION RECEIVED BY KOROKYO MISSIONS TO US AND WESTERN EUROPEAN OCT, ICFTU CABLE OF SUPPORT AND STATEMENTS OF SOLIDARITY ISSUED BY SECGEN OF THREE INTERNATIONAL TRADE SECRETARIATS (PSI, PTTI AND TEACHERS) VISITING JAPAN AT KOROKYO INVITATION,

HAS MADE IT MUCH MORE DIFFICULT
FOR MARXIST ELEMENTS WITHIN SOHYO TO BLOCK EXPANSION
OF SOHYO TIES WITH US AND WEESTERN EUROPEAN LABOR
FEDERATIONS. PARTICULARLY WHEN FREE LABOR'S SUPPORT CONTRASTED
WITH SILENCE FROM WFTU AND ITS AFFILIATES.

7. ISSUE WILL NOW LIE DORMANT UNTIL BEGINNING OF
1976 OPENING LABOR STRUGGLE IN MARCH. PUBLIC
ENTERPRISE UNIONS ALREADY THREATENING TO RENEW WALKOUTS
AT THAT TIME, PROMISING TO LINK RIGHT TO STRIKE
THEME TO ANNUAL WAGE DEMANDS AND HOPING TO ENLIST
SUPPORT OF SOME KEY PRIVATE SECTOR UNIONS, SUCH AS
PRIVATE RAILWAYS. HOWEVER, GOJ POSITION LIKELY TO REMAIN THAT
IT IS CONTINUING TO "STUDY" BASIC ISSUE. HOWEVER, GIVEN STRONG
POSSIBILITY THAT PRIMIN WILL CALL LOWER HOUSE ELECTIONS AT END OF
SPRING WAGE NEGOTIATIONS, LDP POLITICIANS
VIEW ANY REPETITION NEXT SPRING OF ILLEGAL WALKOUT AS
HELPING THEM AT POLLS AND WILL THERFORE CONTINUE TO
OPPOSE ANY CONCESSIONS TO KOROKYO.
HODGSON

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